

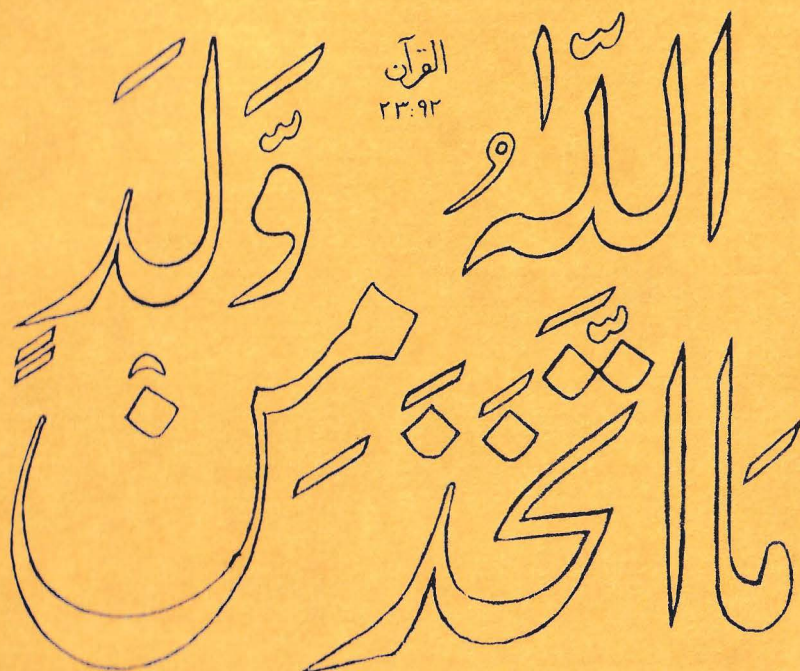
The Muslim Sunrise



Vol. 66

Winter 1999/2000

Issue 4



Allah has not taken unto Himself any son

The Holy Qur'an, 23:92

Jesus was Honored in the East

Jesus was Saved from the Death on the Cross

Some Distinctive Features of Islam

Meaning of "Divine Light"

The Reality of "Son of God"

\$2

A Publication of Ahmadiyya Movement in Islam, USA

The Muslim Sunrise

A Journal of the Islamic Renaissance in America

The Muslim Sunrise is a journal of the Ahmadiyya Movement in Islam, Inc., U.S.A. The magazine is open for discussions on Islam and topics relating to other religions. It highlights the role of Islam in a changing environment. It provides a platform for public opinion on current issues and their solutions. Opinions expressed in the magazine may not necessarily be those of the Ahmadiyya Movement in Islam.

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The Ahmadiyya Muslim Community was founded in 1889 by *Haqrat* Mirza Ghulam Ahmad of Qadian (1835-1908), peace be on him. It is presently headed by *Haqrat* Mirza Tahir Ahmad, the fourth successor to the Holy Founder, may Allah be his support.

The Ahmadiyya Muslim Community in the US is headed by *Sahibzadah* Mirza Muzaffar Ahmad, known as MM Ahmad with respect to his prominent services in the financial arena in the government of Pakistan and at the World Bank.

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In This Issue

Jesus was Honored in the East

Jesus' migration towards East after the incident of crucifixion reviewed
in the light of the Holy Qur'an
by the Promised Messiah, peace be on him
2-3

Jesus was Saved from the Death on the Cross

in the light of the sayings of the Holy Prophet,
may peace and blessings of Allah be on him
4

Some Distinctive Features of Islam

in the words of Ḥaḍrat Mirzā Ṭāhir Aḥmad,
Head of the Worldwide Ahmadiyya Community, May Allah be his support
5-13

Divine Light:

A Source of Enlightenment for the Soul and Its Surroundings
Zeba Nasrullah Malik
14-17

Son of God

Its true meaning from the Bible
B. M. Mirza
18-27

Some Anecdotes Related to Hindus and Atheists

Told by Promised Messiah's First Successor,
may Allah be pleased with him
28-29

Upcoming Events: 30

Subscription Form: 31

Addresses for Contact: 32

About Sunrise: Inside Front Cover

Conditions of Bai'at (Initiation): Inside Back Cover

Future of the Ahmadiyya Community in Islam: Back Cover

Guiding Principles of the Holy Qur'an

إِذْ قَالَتِ الْمَلَكَةُ يَمْرُؤَانِ اللَّهُ يُبَشِّرُكِ بِكَلِمَةٍ
مِنْهُ ۖ اسْمُهُ الْمَسِيحُ عِيسَى ابْنُ مَرْيَمَ وَجِيهًا
فِي الدُّنْيَا وَالْآخِرَةِ وَمِنَ الْمُقَرَّبِينَ ﴿٣٦﴾

When the angels said, 'O Mary, Allah gives thee glad tidings of a word from Him; his name *shall be* the Messiah, Jesus, son of Mary, honored in this world and in the next, and of those who are granted nearness to God.

[The Holy Qur'an, 3:46]

Jesus was Honored in the East

Ḥaḍrat Mirzā Ghulām Aḥmad (1835-1908),
the Promised Messiah and Mahdi, peace be upon him

And the Holy Qur'an contains also the verse: His name shall be the Messiah, Jesus, son of Mary, honored in this world and in the hereafter, and of those who are granted nearness to God. [3:46]

This means that not only here will Jesus have honor and eminence, and enjoy a greatness in the sight of ordinary people; but also in the hereafter. Now, it is evident that Jesus was not honored in the land of Herod and Pilate. He was, on the contrary, disgraced. The suggestion that he would be honored during his second coming to this earth is baseless. It is against the divine books and the eternal divine law of nature. There is moreover no proof of it. The truth, however, is that as Jesus, having had his release from those accursed people, came to the land of the Punjab and honored it with his visit, God gave him great eminence—here he met the ten lost tribes of Israel. It seems that most of these Israelites had adopted Buddhism and some had degenerated into idolatry of a very low kind. But with the coming here of Jesus, most of them returned to the right path; and as there was an exhortation in the teaching of Jesus to believe in the coming Prophet, the ten tribes who came to be known in this land as Afghans and Kashmiris

ultimately all became Muslims. So Jesus came with great honor to this land. There has been discovered recently a coin in this very land of the Punjab, on which is inscribed the name of Jesus (on whom be peace) in Pali characters. This coin belongs to the time of Jesus. This shows that Jesus came to this land and received kingly honor; the coin must have been issued by a king who had become a follower of Jesus. Another coin has been found with the figure of an Israelite. It seems that this too is the figure of Jesus. The Holy Qur'ān also has a verse which says that Jesus was blessed by God wherever he went [19:32]. So these coins show that he received great honor from God, and that he did not die until he had kingly honor.

[Adapted from *Jesus in India* (English Translation of *Masīḥ Hindustān Maiñ*, Authored in Urdū in 1899 and Published in 1908), Chapter 2.]



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Guiding Light from the Holy Prophet
Jesus was Saved
from the Death on the Cross

Ḥaḍrat Mirzā Ghulām Aḥmad (1835-1908),
the Promised Messiah and Mahdī, peace be upon him

Reliable reports in the Ḥadīth show that the Holy Prophet said that Jesus was 125 years of age. Besides, all the sects of Islām believe that Jesus had two unique things about him—things which are not to be found in any other prophet, namely: (1) he lived to a full old age, that is, to 125 years; (2) he traveled in many parts of the world and was therefore called the ‘travelling prophet.’ It is evident that if he had been raised to the skies when he was only 33 years old the report of ‘125 years’ could not have been true, nor could he have traveled so much while he was only thirty-three. Not only are these reports found in the reliable Books of Ḥadīth, they have been so well-known among all the Muslim sects that it is difficult to think of anything which has been more widely known among them.

Kanzul-‘Ummāl (Volume 2) which is a comprehensive Book of Ḥadīth, has on page 34 a Ḥadīth from Abu Huraira: God directed Jesus (on whom be peace) ‘O Jesus! Move from one place to another’—go from one country to another lest thou shouldst be recognized and persecuted.

Again, in the same Book, on the report of Jābar, there is the Ḥadīth (Volume 2, Page 71) Jesus always used to travel; he went from one country to another, and at nightfall wherever he was he used to eat the vegetation of the jungle and to drink pure water.

Again, in the same book, there is a report from Abdullah bin ‘Umar: (Volume 6, Page 51) The Holy Prophet declared that the most favored in the sight of God are the poor. Asked, what was meant by the poor? Were they the people who, like Jesus the Messiah, fled from their country with their faith?

[Adapted from *Jesus in India* (English Translation of *Masīḥ Hindustān Maīñ*, Authored in Urdū in 1899 and Published in 1908), Chapter 2.]

Some Distinctive Features of Islam

Ḥaḍrat Mirzā Ṭāhir Aḥmad

Head of the Ahmadiyya Movement in Islam

A Speech Delivered at the University of Canberra, Australia

(Last Installment)

ISLAMIC CONCEPT OF JUSTICE

I shall now cite a few important examples of Islamic principles which perhaps need particular emphasis in the world today. The first concerns Islamic teaching in respect of equity and justice. Other religions do not present a comprehensive direction about the administration of justice and fair play, and even if they mention this at all, it is in terms that can scarcely be applicable to us today. In fact, some parts of these directions appear to conflict directly with the intellect and sensibilities of our age, and one cannot but conclude that these teachings have either become corrupted or were intended only for local and temporary application. As Judaism presents God as only the God of Israel to the exclusion of every one else, no wonder then, that it does not even in passing deal with the fundamental question of Human Rights as such.

As for Hinduism it seems outright hostile not only to the non-Hindu but also to the Hindu of a low caste, hence narrowing further the field of God's mercy to a much smaller section of the human race. Hinduism decrees: *If a Brahmin is unable to return a loan to one of low caste, the other has no right to demand its return. But if one of low caste is unable to return a loan taken from a Brahmin, he is to be made to work as a laborer or Brahmins till such time as he is able to pay back the loan in full* [31].

Again, in Judaism we fail to detect a concept of justice toward one's enemy. It is said: *And when your lord your God gives them over to you, and you defeat them; then you must utterly destroy them; you shall make no covenant with them* [32].

I shall now, by way of comparison, cite a few examples of Islamic teachings in the same areas. The Qur'ān enjoins, and I quote:

1. And when you judge between people, do so fairly and justly [33].
2. Be strict in observing justice, and be witness for Allah, even though it be against yourselves or against your parents or kindred [34].
3. And let not a people's enmity incite you to act otherwise than with justice. Be always just, that is nearer to righteousness [35].
4. And fight in the way of Allah against those who fight against you but do not transgress. Allah loves not the transgressors [36].
5. And if they incline towards peace, incline thou also towards it [37].

The other example I wish to cite of the eternal teachings of Islam is the one concerning revenge and forgiveness. When we compare Islam's teachings in this sphere with that of other faiths, we are at once struck by this injunction of the Old Testament:

Your eye shall not pity; it shall be life for life, eye for eye, tooth for tooth, hand for hand, foot for foot [38].

Doubtless, such emphasis on vengeance causes not mere wonder, but also saddens our heart. However, I am not citing this example to castigate another teaching, but to show that, when viewed in the light of Qur'ānic principles, even such drastic measures may also sometimes be justified. The Qur'ān, thus helps us in following the conflicting teachings of other faiths in a spirit of sympathy and understanding, which, too, is an exclusive feature of Islam. According to the Qur'ān, the extraction of full vengeance was decreed only to meet the specific needs of a particular period. This was necessary to give heart to the Israelites to make them stand up for their rights after they had remained victimized and enslaved for a prolonged period, and had as a result, become cowardly and developed a deep-seated complex of being an inferior people. Obviously, in such a situation, it would not have been proper to emphasize forgiveness, as it would only have made the Israelites sink deeper into their morass and not given them the confidence and courage to break the shackles of abject bondage. This teaching, therefore, was right and proper in the situation which then existed, and was indeed given by the All-Wise God. On the other hand,

when we consider the New Testament, we find that in contradiction of the previous Scripture, the Old Testament, it emphasizes forgiveness to such an extent that it totally deprives the Israelites of the right to extract any vengeance whatsoever. The real reason for this was that practicing the previous teaching over a long period of time, the Israelites had become hardhearted and ferocious, and this could only be remedied by suspending for a certain period their right to extract vengeance. This is why Jesus admonished them:

You have heard that it was said, 'an eye for an eye, and a tooth for a tooth,' but I say to you do not resist one who is evil. But if anyone strikes you on the right cheek, turn to him the other also, and if anyone would use you and take your coat, let him have your cloak as well [39].

Islam holds these two opposing teachings to be complementary, each suited to the conditions and situation prevailing at the time, and neither, therefore, able to lay claim to being universal or eternal. This perfectly stands to reason, for man was still progressing through earlier stages of development and had not yet become one community to which could be vouchsafed a law that would be final and universal. We believe that Islam is that final law and presents a teaching not influenced by place or time which fact is amply illustrated by its teaching in the matter being considered. The Qur'ān says:

Remember that the recompense of an injury is an injury the like thereof, but whoso forgives and thereby brings about a reformation, his reward is with Allah. Surely, Allah loves not wrongdoers [40].

Islam thus combines the best features of both the earlier teachings, with the vital addition that forgiveness is commended provided it is likely to result in an improvement and in the correction of the defaulter, that being the real objective. If not, then punishment is held to be necessary, but not exceeding the degree to which one is wronged. Surely, this guidance is in full conformity with human nature and is as practicable today as when it was revealed fourteen centuries ago.

SOME OTHER DISTINCTIONS

The subject of Islam's distinctive features is a very vast one, and I have been able to deal with only just a few aspects that I had chosen for this presentation. Time will permit no more than a passing reference for certain other aspects which I would not wish to omit;

1. Islam holds God to be the Creator of the universe and presents His Unity in stark simple terms, comprehensible and appealing both to a rustic and an intellectual. Islam calls God a Perfect Being, the fountainhead of all excellences and free of all blemishes. He is a living God Who manifests Himself everywhere and Who loves His creation and listens to their supplications. None of His attributes have been suspended. He, therefore, communicates with mankind as before, and has not barred the avenues to reach Him directly.
2. Islam holds that there is no contradiction between God's word and His deed. It, thus, frees us from the traditional rivalry between science and religion, and does not require man to believe in anything beyond the laws of nature determined by Him. He urges us to ponder over nature and to put it to beneficent use, for everything has been created for the benefit of mankind.
3. Islam does not make idle claims or compel us to believe what we do not understand. It supports its teachings with reason and explanation, satisfying our intellect and also the depths of our soul.
4. Islam is not based on myths or folklore. It invites everyone to experiment for himself and holds that truth is always verifiable, in one form or another.
5. The revealed Book of Islam is unique, distinguishing it from all other faiths. Despite their collective efforts over centuries, its opponents have not been able to equal even a small portion of this wondrous Book. Its merit lies not only in its unique literary excellence, but also in the simplicity and comprehensiveness of its teachings. The Qur'ān proclaims that it is the best teaching—a claim made by no other revealed book.

6. The Qur'ān claims that it combines the best features of earlier scriptures, and all enduring and comprehensive teaching has been placed within its fold. The Qur'ān says: *Herein are lasting commandments and this indeed is what is taught in former Scriptures — The Scriptures of Abraham and Moses.*
7. A distinctive feature of Islam is that its revealed Book is in a living language. Is it not curious that the languages of all other revealed Books are either dead or no longer in general use? A living Book, it seems, had to be in a living and ever-enduring language.
8. Another distinction of Islam is that its Prophet passed through every imaginable stage of human experience, starting from an impoverished and orphaned childhood and ending as the undisputed ruler of his people. His life has been documented in minute detail and reflects unparalleled faith in God and constant sacrifice in His way. He lived a full and eventful life packed with action, and has left behind an example of perfect conduct in every sphere of human endeavor. This is only fitting and proper, as he was a living interpretation of the Qur'ān, and by personal example lighted the way of mankind for all time to come—a role not fulfilled adequately by any other Prophet.
9. Another distinction of Islam is its many prophecies that have been fulfilled over the ages and have reinforced the faith of its followers in the existence of the All-Knowing and Living God. This process continues to this day, as witnessed by the recent discovery of the preserved body of the Pharaoh who had driven Moses and his people out of Egypt. Another fresh example of the Qur'ānic prophecy is about the development of new means of destruction, where fire would be locked in minute particles which would stretch and agitate before exploding with a ferocity that would cause mountains to evaporate.
10. Another feature of Islam is that when it talks of the hereafter and life after death, it also prophesies future events of this world, the fulfillment of which reinforces the faith of its followers in life after death.

11. Islam is distinct from other faiths in providing a comprehensive code of conduct in individual, collective and international dealings. These directions encompass every imaginable situation and include the relationship between the young and the old, the employer and the employee, among family members, between friends and partners, and even between adversaries. The rules and principles enunciated are truly universal and have already stood the test of time.
12. Islam proclaims complete equality among mankind, irrespective of differences of caste, creed and color. The only criterion of honor it accepts is that of righteousness, not of birth, riches, race or color. The Qur'ān says:

Verily, the most honorable among you, in the sight of Allah, is he who is the most righteous among you [41].

And again:

Whoso does good, whether male or female, and is believer — these will enter the Garden; they will be provided therein without measure [42].

13. Islam presents a definition of good and evil that distinguishes it from all other faiths. It does not hold natural human desires to be evil; it only calls their inordinate and improper satisfaction to be evil. Islam teaches that our natural inclinations should be regulated and channeled so as to make them constructive and beneficent for society.
14. Islam has not only made women heirs to property, but has also given them equal rights with men and not in a manner that would disregard the distinctive features of their anatomy and their exclusive responsibilities in the bearing and nursing of children.

A RELIGION OF PEACE

In the end, I would give all seekers of peace the glad tidings that Islam alone is the faith that guarantees peace in all spheres and at all levels: individual, social, economic, national and supernational. Islam

alone bears a name, the literal meaning of which is 'peace,' and one who becomes a Muslim, not only enters a safe haven himself but also guarantees it for others, and shuns all actions that might lead to inequity and disruption. The Holy Prophet said that a Muslim is he whose word and deed do no harm to others [43]. The momentous address of the Holy Prophet delivered shortly before his death, and after the performance of what has come to be called the Farewell Pilgrimage, is an eternal charter of peace for all mankind. Islam enjoins peace not only between men, but also between man and his Maker, so that not only other men remain unharmed from the word and deed of a Muslim, but he himself remains safe from God's wrath and censure, the recompense which is merited as a result of committing transgression. So, a Muslim's peace is obtained in this world and also extends to the hereafter.

Islam's teachings, if followed by the nations of the world, are fully capable of saving them from strife and destruction. Islam is a living faith and claims to be able to place the relationship of man with God on the same plane as it was in the days long past. Islam does not consider revelation and communion with God to be a thing of the past. It believes that the avenues of spiritual bliss trodden upon by Noah, Abraham, Moses, Jesus and, above all, the Prophet of Islam, are still open and beckoning to those desirous of close communion with God.

THE AHMADIYYA MOVEMENT

The Ahmadiyya Movement in Islam believes that these claims have been fulfilled in our age in the person of its founder Ḥaḍrat Mirzā Ghulām Aḥmad who was born in 1835 in the remote village of Qādiān in India. He was enabled by divine mercy to tread the path of piety and righteousness, and, strictly following the teachings of Islam, was blessed with intimate communion with the Almighty. He received divine revelation which also formed the basis of his many prophecies, whose unfailing fulfillment has continued beyond his life.

In accordance with divine direction, he founded the Ahmadiyya Movement in Islam in the year 1889, and, leaving behind a dedicated and vibrant Community of disciples numbering several hundred thousands, he departed from this earthly abode in 1908. His mission

continues, and the Community has all along been headed by elected successors.

While describing his mission, The founder of our Movement had said:

I have been sent that I should prove that Islam alone is a living religion. And I have been blessed with spiritual powers that render helpless those of other faiths, and also those from among us who are spiritually blind. I can demonstrate to every opponent that the Qur'ān is a miracle in its teachings, its enlightened knowledge, its deep and delicate insight, and in its perfect eloquence. It excels the miracles of Moses, and those of Jesus a hundred fold [44].

He goes on to say: I am the light in the darkness of this age. He who follows me, will be saved from the pits and ditches dug by the Devil to ensnare those straying in the dark. He has sent me so that I should lead the world, gently and in peace, to the One True God, and re-establish the moral excellences of Islam. And I have been given heavenly signs to satisfy those who seek the truth [45].

I now end my address with another quotation from the writings of the Founder of the Ahmadiyya Movement, which is a call to the whole of mankind:

The mirror which enables you to behold That lofty Being, is His communion with man... Let one whose heart yearns for the truth, stand up and search. I tell you in all truth, that if souls search honestly and hearts really thirst for the truth, then men should look for the right method and the right path. But how will this open, and how will this veil be lifted? I assure all seekers that Islam alone gives the glad tidings of this path, for others have long since placed a seal on God's revelation. But, be assured that God has not placed this seal: this is a mere excuse conjured up by man in his deprivation. Verily, as it is not possible to see without our eyes, or hear without our ears, in exactly the same way, it is impossible to behold the

countenance of That Beloved, without the help of the Qur'ān. I was a young man, and now I am grown old, but I have never found anyone who has drunk of the ultimate spiritual elixir, except from this holy spring [46].

Doubtless, this call is a life-giving message for every soul that seeks the real truth.

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33. Qur'ān 4:59.
34. Qur'ān 4: 136.
35. Qur'ān 5.- 9.
36. Qur'ān 2: 91.
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38. Exodus 21:24.
39. Matthew 5:35-45.
40. Qur'ān 42-41.
41. Qur'ān 49:14.
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Note: Previous installments can be found in the Summer 98, Fall/Winter 98, and Summer/Fall 99 issues of the Muslim Sunrise.



Divine Light: A Source of Enlightenment for the Soul and Its Surroundings

Zeba Nasrullah Malik, San Diego CA

The Holy Qur'ān states that Allah is the Nūr of the heavens and the earth. What is the first thing that comes to our mind when we think of Allah's attribute of Nūr? Most of us would think that it is the Light, like the light of the sun or the moon. Yes it is true, but this is only a superficial way of thinking about it. The fact is that this attribute encompasses the whole creation of the universe. According to the Holy Qur'ān, the Sayings of the Holy Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be on him) and the sayings of the Promised Messiah (peace be on him), every creation, whether it is water, soil, animal kingdom or human kingdom, whether it is the light or darkness, seen or unseen, are all part of Nūr or Divine Light. Every creation has taken some portion of this attribute from Allah's Nūr; otherwise their creation could not have been possible.

The more subtle the Light is, the more potent and strong it becomes in its effects. When we think of Allah, we say that Allah is Nūr as stated by the Holy Prophet, peace and blessings of Allah be on him. when asked if he had seen Allah. The Holy Prophet replied "How can I see Allah, He is Nūr." This attribute is comprised of all of Allah's attributes combined in one. Now if we think that the earth and the water are created from Nūr and if Allah is also Nūr, then how does it all come together? An example is needed to explain this idea more clearly. When a person delivers a speech, the idea begins in his or her mind - there is no sound or noise in the brain where the subject matter is being produced, analyzed and sorted out to be delivered to the audience. The subject matter travels from the brain and is conveyed through the medium of the throat, tongue and lips. From here it is transmitted through the waves that are travelling in the space between the audience and the speaker. None of us can see these waves but science has proven that it is through this medium that the sound is heard. These waves when received by the ears are heard as a voice, but

when this voice reaches the ear drums, it converts the sound into a message that reaches the brain through the oratory nerves. The brain receives this message very quietly, absorbs it, analyses it and if any emotion is involved, it sends the message to the rest of the human nervous system resulting in laughter or tears depending on the emotions. Thus all systems of communication and all mechanisms involved have received their share from this attribute, Nūr. The important thing to notice in this example is that the brain is the most powerful organ in this whole process; yet, it is the most quiet one. This supports the fact that the more potent the form of Nūr is, the more subtle, subdued and refined it is, and of all the forms of Nūr, the most potent or strongest form is the Nūr that is unseen and that is Allah the Almighty Himself. What we see within us and around us is a reflection of Allah's Divine Light or Nūr. This is why prayer is considered our best weapon and best friend. The power of prayer cannot be physically seen. And yet, it is the most powerful source provided to man whose results can be observed even in the next several generations.

What kind of light is it which when received, gives direction and purpose to human life? This is The Divine Light. It is received by the prophets and then conveyed to mankind for their spiritual advancement. According to the Promised Messiah, Prophets have been endowed with greater capacity of Nūr than other human beings. When this internal capacity of Nūr through constant communion with Allah reaches its point of maturation, Allah the Almighty reveals himself through his angels to His messengers with Divine Light, and commands them to spread His message to mankind so that they may be enlightened as well. One kind of Nūr is present in every thing that has been created, and the other kind of Nūr is received through spiritual growth. From amongst all the Prophets, our beloved Prophet Muhammad (peace and blessings of Allah be on him). was endowed with the greatest capacity of Nūr. When he developed these internal capacities to the point of maturation, Allah the Exalted chose to make the Holy Prophet "Light upon Light," as IS mentioned in Sūrah Nūr (24:36). Prophet Muhammad is also referred to in the Holy Qur'ān (Sūrah Al-Aḥzāb: 47) as "The Bright Sun." The sun, as a central point in our physical universe, is the greatest source of light. It's heat and radiation provides the earth with a natural cleansing system in the absence of which, the

earth would become an extremely unhealthy place to live. Like wise, in the spiritual world, Our beloved Prophet Muhammad is like the Sun around which all the stars and the moon revolve, that is, all other Prophets revolve around and receive light from the Holy Prophet. No Prophet can even come close to the likes of Prophet Muhammad. His light enlightens the east and the west, north and the south. His message has no boundaries. The divine message provides for the cleansing of our hearts, minds and souls, and gives new birth to the spiritually dead.

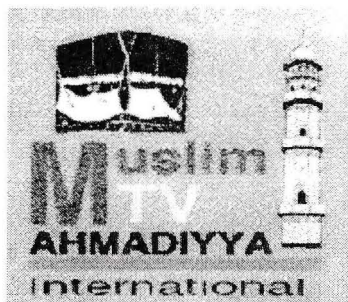
How can ordinary people like us benefit from this Divine Light? The answer is simple yet difficult. We have to receive this light through the Light of Holy Qur'ān and the life of our Master Prophet Muhammad (peace and blessings of Allah be on him). Just as the Prophets reach the full development of inner capacities to receive divine light, other humans have to develop their inner capacities to benefit from the Divine Light that descended upon the messengers. According to the Promised Messiah (peace be on him), in order to develop these capacities one needs to have a sound heart and sound mind. The presence of both of these qualities is essential. If we lack in any of these two, then we are at a loss, because one cannot be complete without the other. The heart is the center of our intentions, and if our intentions are not pure, then our practice which requires the use of mental capacities, will also be flawed. And if our intentions are pure and our hearts are clean, but we do not have the wisdom to carry out our intentions skillfully, then, we will not be able to benefit fully from the divine light.

Thus, we need to have a sound heart that is clean and pure, one that carries no grudges or bad feelings about others, and have a sound mind that is not prejudiced but rises above these human weaknesses. And we need to develop a living relationship with God Almighty through diligent prayer and faith. In this way, we will be able to convey the message of Islam to mankind around us. If we are self enlightened, then we do not need to get into extensive arguments with other people, because a soul that is searching for truth will see the truth and the enlightenment within you. This is the only effective way of conveying the message. Ḥaḍrat Khalīfatul-Masīḥ IV has said:

“Nūr is the Nūr of character, it grants light to the onlookers. It transforms darkness into light and night into day. Therefore, at first, develop in you that glow, and enlighten your demeanor with which you have to conquer the world.”

Friday Sermon, December 22, 1995.

May Allah enable us to do so. Āmīn.



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Son of God

B. M. Mirza, Ph.D.

The phrase *son of God* is used in numerous places in the Bible. Usually, it applies to the one whose office specially represents God among men. The same epithet, when applied to Jesus (peace be on him), is taken to mean a literal physical relationship with God.

Where did this new meaning come from? There is no place in the Bible where Jesus referred to this new meaning of the phrase. A careful study of the Bible, in fact, does not lend any support to this different meaning as applied to Jesus.

Let us review some passages from the Old and the New Testaments which include the phrase *son of God*.

In the book of Luke, the genealogy of Jesus is described in detail. This description goes all the way to Adam. We read,

“... which was the son of Seth, which was the son of Adam, which was the son of God.” (Luke 3:38)

Adam, according to this description, had to be the first son of God. We can all agree, however, that no literal physical relationship was alluded to and this phrase is explained in Genesis thus,

“This is the book of the generations of Adam. In the day that God created man, in the likeness of God made he him.” (Genesis 5:1)

Around the time of Noah, this phrase is again used in the same sense,

“... when men began to multiply on the face of the earth, and daughters were born unto them, That the sons of God saw the daughters of men that they were fair; and they took them wives... when the sons of God came in unto the daughters of men, and they bare children to them, the same became mighty men which were of old, men of renown.” (Genesis 6:1-4)

Adam was not actually referred to as the firstborn son of God, but some of the prophets long after Adam are referred to as the firstborn sons of God,

“And thou shalt say unto Pharaoh, thus saith the Lord,
Israel is my son, even my firstborn.” (Jeremiah 31:9)

In addition of Israel and Ephraim being referred to as the firstborn sons of God, David is also given the same distinction,

“I have found David my servant... He shall cry unto
me, thou art my father, my God, and the rock of my
salvation. Also I will make him my firstborn, higher than
the kings of the earth.” (Psalms 89:20-27)

In addition to all these “firstborn” sons of God, many others are given the distinction of being called the “son of God” in the Bible. For instance, Solomon is called the son of God.

“Behold a son shall be born to thee, who shall be a man
of rest... for his name shall be Solomon... and he shall be
my son, and I will be his father... Now, my son, the Lord
be with thee...” (I Chronicles 22:9-11)

The same phrase *son of God* is used in many more places. First we give some further quotes from the Old Testament.

“I will declare the decree: the Lord hath said unto me,
Thou art my son; this day have I begotten thee.”
(Psalms 2:17)

“I will be his father, and he shall be my son. If he
commit inequity, I will chasten him with the rod of men,
and with the stripes of the children of men.”
(II Samuel 7:14)

“Now there was a day when the sons of God came to
present themselves before the Lord...” (Job 1:6)

“When the morning stars sang together and all the sons
of God shouted for joy.” (Job 38:7)

“Thus saith the Lord, the Holy One of Israel, and his
Maker, Ask me of things to come concerning my sons, and

concerning the work of my hands command ye me.”
(Isaiah 45:11)

“Yet the number of the children of Israel shall be as the sand of the sea... it shall be said unto them, Ye are the sons of the living God.”
(Hosea 1:10)

And here are some quotes from the New Testament,

“But as many as received him, to them gave he power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe in his name.”
(John 1:12)

“Forasmuch then as we are the offspring of God, we ought not to think that the Godhead is like unto gold, or silver, or stone, graven by art and man’s device.”
(The Acts 17:29)

“For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, they are the sons of God.”
(Romans 8:14)

“For the earnest expectation of the creature waiteth for the manifestation of the sons of God.”
(Romans 8:19)

“And will be a Father unto you, and ye shall be my sons and daughters, saith the Lord Almighty.”
(II Corinthians 6:18)

“That ye may be blameless and harmless, the sons of God, without rebuke, in the midst of a crooked and perverse nation, among whom ye shine as lights in the world.”
(Philippians 2:15)

“Blessed are the peace makers, for they shall be called the children of God.”
(Matt. 5:9)

“Behold, what manner of love the Father hath bestowed upon us, that we should be called the sons of God... Beloved, now are we the sons of God.”
(1 John 3:1,2)

“He that overcometh shall inherit all things; and I will

be his God, and he shall be my son.” (Revelation 21:7)

Not only is the phrase “son of God” used for the chosen ones of God, sometimes they are called God also.

“I have said, Ye are gods; and all of you are children of the most high.” (Psalms 82:6)

“Unto us a child is born... and his name shall be called Wonderful, Counsellor, The mighty God, The everlasting Father, the Prince of Peace.” (Isaiah 9:6)

In a similar fashion, God is referred to as Father in numerous places. Here are a few examples.

“A father of the fatherless, and a judge of the widows, is God in his holy habitation.” (Psalms 68:5)

“Doubtless thou art our Father, though Abraham be ignorant of us and Israel acknowledges us not: Thou O Lord, art our Father, our Redeemer.” (Isaiah 63:16)

“But now, O Lord, thou art our Father, we are the clay and Thou our potter...” (Isaiah 64:8)

“Have we not all one Father? hath not one God created us?” (Malachi 2:10)

“And he said unto them, when ye pray, say, Our Father which art in heaven, Hallowed be thy name.” (Luke 11:2)

We have quoted both the Old and the New Testaments above. It should be quite clear to our readers that the use of the term *son of God* and *Father* are purely theocratic, implying no physical relationship.

Son of Man

The phrase “son of man” is used extensively in the Old and New Testament. In the book of Ezekiel, for instance, it is used 90 times, and always to denote a prophet of God. It is repeated 80 times in the New Testament. Jesus used this phrase for himself 61 times in the New Testament. Since the phrase is used without any explanations, it must bear the same meanings which are historically accepted for its use in The Old Testament, namely, a prophet of God.

Compared to this, Jesus used the phrase "Son of God" only a very few times. Nowhere in the synoptics (Matthew, Mark and Luke) has Jesus ever used it for himself. Only in John, the phrase is ascribed to him and only on four occasions (John 5:25; 9:35; 10:36; 11:04). If this particular application meant any different relationship, it needed an explanation. Jesus applies this term to himself without any new explanation which certainly was necessary if it was intended to convey any other meaning than the historical sense with which the people of his time were familiar.

The use of the epithet *son of man* 80 times in the New Testament conveys to us a clear meaning of the title "Son of God." Only one writer, John, ascribes it to Jesus only 4 times. Since no special explanation is given anywhere, it can only mean the same it always meant throughout the Old Testament (and we have quoted numerous passages above), namely, a chosen one of God, a prophet of God.

Jesus himself explains the meaning of the title "Son of God" in one of the only four instances he is reported to have called himself *Son of God*. The Jews accused him of calling himself God.

"... For a good work we stone thee not, but for blasphemy; and because that thou, being man, makest thyself God."
(John 10:31)

Now, we must accept the answer given by Jesus himself if we profess to believe in him. Did he imply any physical relationship between himself and God? We read,

"Jesus answered them, is it not written in your law, I said, Ye are gods? (This is a reference to Psalms 82:6) If he call them gods unto whom the word of God came, and the scripture cannot be broken; Say ye of him, whom the Father has sanctified, and sent unto the world, Thou blasphemest; because I said, I am the Son of God?"

(John 10:34-36)

This explanation, offered by Jesus himself, makes it quite clear that the expression "Son of God" as applied to Jesus by himself meant no

more in his case than it had meant historically. Thus, Jesus claimed to be the *son of God* in a theocratic sense, not as God, the Son, as is now claimed. Other expressions used by Jesus, as an example,

“the Father is in me and I in him.” (John 10:39),

and

“I and my Father are one.” (John 10:30)

do not put any special meaning either. Similar expressions are used for the disciples also. We read,

“That they all may be one; as thou, Father, art in me, and I in thee, that they also may be one in us: that the world may believe that thou hath sent me. And the glory which thou gavest me I have given them; that they may be one, even as we are one: I in them, and thou in me, that they may be made perfect in one.” (John 17:21-23).

“One God and Father of all, who is above all, and through all, and in you all.” (Ephesians 4:6).

“But to us there is but one God, the Father, of whom are all things, and we in him.” (I Corinthians 8:6)

Jesus Disclaimed Godhead

The fact is that Jesus did not claim to be God or a physical Son of God. If anything, one finds a repudiation by Jesus himself of the notion that he is God himself or God, the Son. The following quotations from the Bible makes it obvious.

“And, behold, one came and said unto him, good Master, what good things shall I do, that I may have eternal life? And he said unto him, Why callest thou me Good? there is none good but one, that is, God.”

(Matthew 19:16-17)

“And he saith unto them, Ye shall drink indeed of the cup that I shall drink of, and to be baptized with the baptism that I am baptized with: but to sit on my right hand, and on my left, is not mine to give, but it shall be

given to them for whom it is prepared of my Father.”
(Matthew 20:23)

“But of that day and that hour knoweth no man, no, not the angels which are in heaven, neither the Son, but the Father.”
(Mark 13:32)

“If you loved me, ye would rejoice, because I said, I go unto the Father: for my Father is greater than I.” (John 14:28)

Only One God

If Jesus was God the Son, a part of the Trinity preached by the Church of today, he most certainly would have said so very clearly and emphatically. The Jews of his time believed in One God. He should have clearly laid down that this was not so. The above quotations prove that he, in fact, denied being a deity. Not only that, he in fact preached that there was only one God: We read

“And one of the scribes came, and having heard them reasoning together, and perceiving that he had answered them well, asked him, Which is the first commandment of all?

“And Jesus answered him, The first of all the commandments is, Hear, O Israel; The Lord our God is one Lord:

“And thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind, and with all thy strength:..

“And the scribe said unto him, Well, Master, thou hast said the truth: for there is one God, and there is none other but he:”
(Mark 12:28-32)

Here Jesus is repeating the Old Testament book of Deuteronomy, Chapter 6:4:

“Hear, O Israel: The Lord our God is one Lord.”

(Deut. 6:4)

Again we read:

“One Lord, one faith, one baptism, One God and Father of all, who is above all, and through all, and in you all.”
(Ephesians 4:5-6)

In recent times, there has been a growing awareness on the part of theologians that the picture of Jesus as God or the physical Son of God cannot stand any scrutiny. Albert Schweitzer, in his well known book, *The Quest of the Historical Jesus*, summarizes his book as follows.

“The Jesus of Nazareth who came forward publicly as the Messiah, who preached the ethic of the Kingdom of God, who founded the Kingdom of Heaven upon earth, and died to give his work its final consecration, ***never had any existence***. He is a figure designed by rationalism, endowed with life by liberalism, and clothed by modern theology in an historical garb.”

“This image has not been destroyed from without, it has fallen to pieces, cleft and disintegrated by the concrete historical problems which came to the surface one after another, and... refused to be planed down to fit the design on which the Jesus of theology of the last hundred and thirty years had been constructed...”
(Page 398)

The Gospel of St. Mark begins with the following verse.

“The beginning of the gospel of Jesus Christ, the Son of God.”
(Mark 1:1)

The title “Son of God” does not appear in many of the old manuscripts. Codex Sinaiticus, a manuscript of the fourth century does not have it. Tischendorf and Westcott & Hort have this title on the margin and not in the main text. It was much later that the expression became a part of the main text in the revised version.

In the *International Critical Commentary on the Holy Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments*, prepared by the New York Theological Seminary, we read the following explanation of the title “Son of God.”

“This term, Son of God, like the title Messiah, is applied to the Messianic King in the uncanonical Jewish literature. But its use is purely theocratic and official, corresponding to the O.T. (Old Testament) use to denote any one whose office specially represents God among men, such as kings and judges (John 10:36). Its use to denote the relation to God springing from the miraculous conception is confined to Luke (1:35), and its application to Jesus’ metaphysical relation to God is not found in the Synoptics. The term is applied by Jesus to himself in his discourse without any explanation, whereas it would require explanation if it was intended to convey any other meaning than the historical sense with which the people were familiar... In fact, there is nowhere in the Synoptics any indication that the title is used so as to involve any departure from the current theocratic sense; and indications, such as the above, are not wanting that the title does retain its common meaning at the time. When we get outside of these historical books, we come upon the metaphysical sonship as possibly the prevalent meaning of the term. *Son of God* means here, then, that the Messianic kingdom is a theocracy, in which God is the real ruler, and the Messianic king represents God.” (Pp. 3-4).

Charles C. Anderson, in his book, *Critical Quest of Jesus*, reviews a number of books on this subject. Reviewing the works of Harnack (*What is Christianity*, 1901), Klausner (*Jesus of Nazareth*, 1925), Case (*Jesus: A New Biography*, 1927), Mackinnon (*The Historical Jesus*, 1931), and Goguel (*The Life of Jesus*, 1933), the author concludes,

“Here the writers are agreed both by direct statement and by implication that Jesus was not the metaphysical Son of God or deity....

“If then we are to attempt to estimate the significance of Jesus, it must be from the point of view of his excellence as a man.” (Page 53)

In a recent book, the *Myth of God Incarnate*, edited by Rev. John Hick, we read the following.

"The writers of this book are convinced that another major theological development is called for in this last part of the twentieth century. The need arises from growing knowledge of Christian origins and involves a recognition that Jesus was (and he is presented in Acts 2:21) "a man approved of God" for a special role within the divine purpose, and that the later conception of him as God incarnate, the Second Person of the Holy Trinity living a human life, is a mythological or poetic way of expressing his significance for us." (Page ix)

We agree with the seven well known theologians who authored the book *The Myth of God Incarnate*, that Christianity is under great pressure, due the new knowledge about the life and times of Christ available to us today, "to go on adapting itself into something which can be believed."

There is still a lot of emphasis in the Christian literature on the physical Sonship of Jesus Christ. If Christ himself did not mean it and those present in his lifetime did not take it that way, by what authority can anyone else change the meaning of the title "The Son of God"? It is high time we face the realities and say out loud what most of us must recognize deep down in our hearts.

Contributing to the Muslim Sunrise

Literary Contributions

We prefer to receive articles, comments, etc.,
on a computer disk.

Typed manuscripts are also welcome. Mailing address is,
The Editor, The Muslim Sunrise,
15000 Good Hope Road, Silver Spring MD 20905.

Some Anecdotes Related to Hindus and Atheists

Related by Ḥaḍrat Maulvī Nūruddīn (1841-1914),

May Allah be pleased with him

(First Successor to Ḥaḍrat Mirzā Ghulām Aḥmad,

The Promised Messiah, Peace be on him)

Presented in English by Syed Sājid Aḥmad



During a journey, a fine white cloth was spread out over a large area in the court of a king. A soft breeze was causing ripples in the cloth creating a soothing view. The king was discussing the existence of God with his vizier who had an atheistic disposition. The king asked me to relate an argument in favor of the existence of God.

I submitted, *This fascinating billowing of the cloth!*

The king looked at it and liked it and asked, *How?*

I said, *Are the ripples caused by the intention of the cloth or its physical disposition?*

The vizier said, *These ripples are a result of the speed of the air and the affected cloth is not the affector.*

I submitted, *Does the air have this physical property?*

He said, *Due to a specific atmospheric condition, the air has attained this speed.*

I said, *Is this condition by intention?*

I knew he is a philosopher and will not be able to go more than a few steps.

He said, *The cause of this condition seems to be unknown.*

I said, *Does that unknown have intention or not?*

On this he said, *A great power is the cause of this phenomenon.*

On this reply, *I and the king said instantly, This is a specific term. Call Him Allah, Permeshvar, God, whatever you like.*

Then he said, *I am not a disbeliever but rather I am looking for a proof.*



A saw a person who took students with him to elegant mansions, and while looking at them, said, *I have a great desire that would these be the Arabic schools, and would that the Muslims were like this and like that and lived in honor, etc.*

After his comments had created their effect, he said, *If there really were a Power, that is, the Almighty God, then there would have not been this inequity.*

Observe, how carefully atheism is taught!



An Arya objected to me, *Why do you consider the direction of the Qibla (House of God in Mecca) honorable, and why do you face in that direction during Prayers?*

I said, *Why do you not turn your back towards havan (sacrificial ladle) during the ceremony? And while you conversed with me right now, why did you not turn your back towards me?*

He responded, *I will not raise this objection again.*



Someone asked me, *What is the shape and color of your God?*

I said, *First tell me the shape of your voice. What is the form of your ability to taste? What is the color of your eyesight?*

He said, *At least their positions are known.*

I said, *Is there a position determined for time? A millionth of a second is encompassing the whole existence. Time does not have a shape but exists. No position is known for it. We know of many creations that we cannot determine their position. While such examples exist about the creatures, then God is God.*

From Mirqātul-Yaqn fi Ḥayāt-i-Nūraddīn,

Upcoming Events

Following events are scheduled locally.
Please call the related local center for further information.



Muṣliḥ-i-Mau'ūd Day, Sunday, February 20, 2000

Fulfilment of the prophecy of *Ḥaḍrat* Mirzā Ghulām Aḥmad, the Promised Messiah, peace be on him, concerning the Muṣliḥ-i-Mau'ūd (Promised Reformer) in the person of *Ḥaḍrat* Mirzā Bashiruddīn Maḥmūd Aḥmad, may Allah be pleased with him.



'Idul-Aḍḥa: Friday, March 17, 2000

Worldwide celebration of the sacrifice of *Ḥaḍrat* Ibrāhīm (Abraham), peace be on him, centered around the carrying out of specified rites at Ka'ba in Mecca.



Masiḥ-i-Mau'ūd Day: Sunday, March 26, 2000

Fulfilment of the prophecies concerning the second coming of the Messiah in the person of *Ḥaḍrat* Mirza Ghulām Aḥmad, peace be on him, and his works.



Khilāfat Day: Saturday, May 27, 2000

Meetings concerning the importance of the institution of vicegerency in Islam established in the Ahmadiyya Muslim Community since May 1908.



Local Ahmadiyya Muslim Communities are scheduled to celebrate the
Noble Character of the Holy Prophet Muhammad,
peace and blessings of Allah be on him, on Sunday, September 17, 2000.



Spokespersons from major religions are expected to participate in

Religious Founders' Day

arranged at various locations on Sunday, October 15, 2000.



Ramaḍān

Month of Annual Fasting is scheduled to start on November 27, 2000.



'Idul-Fiṭr: Friday, December 27, 2000

Worldwide celebration at the end of Ramaḍān.

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Conditions of *Bai'at* (Initiation)

in The Ahmadiyya Movement in Islam

by *Ḥaḍrat* Mirza Ghulam Ahmad of Qadian

The Promised Messiah and Mahdi (peace be upon him)

The initiate shall solemnly promise:

I. That he/she shall abstain from *Shirk* (association of any partner with God) right up to the day of his/her death.

II. That he/she shall keep away from falsehood, fornication, adultery, trespasses of the eye, debauchery, dissipation, cruelty, dishonesty, mischief and rebellion; and will not permit himself/herself to be carried away by passions, however strong they may be.

III. That he/she shall regularly offer the five daily prayers in accordance with the commandments of God and the Holy Prophet (*peace and blessings of Allah be upon him*); and shall try his/her best to be regular in offering the Tahajjud (pre-dawn supererogatory prayers) and invoking *Darud* (blessings) on the Holy Prophet (*peace and blessings of Allah be upon him*); that he/she shall make it his/her daily routine to ask forgiveness for his/her sins, to remember the bounties of God and to praise and glorify Him.

IV. That under the impulse of any passions, he/she shall cause no harm whatsoever to the creatures of Allah in general, and Muslims in particular, neither by his/her tongue nor by his/her hands nor by any other means.

V. That he/she shall remain faithful to God in all circumstances of life, in sorrow and happiness, adversity and prosperity, in felicity and trials; and shall in all conditions remain resigned to the decree of Allah and keep himself/herself ready to face all kinds of indignities and sufferings in His way and shall never turn away from it at the onslaught of any misfortune; on the contrary, he/she shall march forward.

VI. That he/she shall refrain from following un-Islamic customs and lustful inclinations, and shall completely submit himself/herself to the authority of the Holy Qur'an; and shall make the Word of God and the Sayings of the Holy Prophet (*peace and blessings of Allah be upon him*) the guiding principles in every walk of his/her life.

VII. That he/she shall entirely give up pride and vanity and shall pass all his/her life in humbleness, cheerfulness, forbearance and meekness.

VIII. That he/she shall hold faith, the honor of faith, and the cause of Islam dearer to him/her than his/her life, wealth, honor, children and all other dear ones.

IX. That he/she shall keep himself/herself occupied in the service of God's creatures for His sake only; and shall endeavor to benefit mankind to the best of his/her God-given abilities and powers.

X. That he/she shall enter into a bond of brotherhood with this humble servant of God, pledging obedience to me in everything good, for the sake of Allah, and remain faithful to it till the day of his/her death; that he/she shall exert such a high devotion in the observance of this bond as is not to be found in any other worldly relationship and connections demanding devoted dutifulness.

(Translated from *Ishtihār Takmil-i-Tabligh*, January 12, 1889)

Future of the
Ahmadiyya Community in Islam

**Ḥadrat Mirzā Ghulam Aḥmad (1835-1908),
the Promised Messiah and Mahdi, peace be upon him**

Rest assured that this is a tree planted by the Hand of God. He will never permit it to go waste. He will not be satisfied until He has seen it through to its fullness. He will see to it that it is well irrigated and will build a protective fence around it. Thus God will bless my followers with astounding progress and prosperity. Have you left any stones unturned? Had it been the work of man, this tree would have been cut and felled since long and no trace of it would have remained.

(Rūḥānī Khazā'in, Vol. 11, Anjām-i-Ātham, P. 64)

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